Stockland Parish Council

Minutes of the Virtual Meeting of the Turbaries Management Committee held on Wednesday 10th March 2021, from 4pm.

1) **Public Participation Time** (SO 1e & f); There were no members of the public present.
2) **Resolved to exclude members of the press and public**; there were no confidential items**.**
3) **To record those Present/Apologies for absence** and consider whether to approve the reasons given (Cllrs only); D Allen (chair); Cllrs P Derryman, Drew, Griffiths and A Thompkins, Geoff Pearce (DBW&P) Toby Taylor(RSPB), Paul Spencer(resident); Tim Youngs**(**AONB Manager), in attendance Ken Pearson (PC Clerk); apologies from Alasdair Bruce(resident); to note that Cllr Derryman replaces M Learmouth on this Committee.
4) **Declarations of Interest**: No interests were declared.
5) **Turbaries Management Committee Minutes**-resolved to note that the draft Minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday, 4th November**,** were confirmed and signed by the Council on the 24th Nov, 2020.
6) **Action Review Summary**: to receive and review the following items:
   i) **AONB Facilitation Fund**; resolved to receive an update from the scheme and included the following; event in Marshwood on "Hedgerow coppicing for firewood" on 11th December; the next event under this scheme is scheduled for 18th March 'Benefits of trees for livestock'.
   ii) **Higher Level and Basic Payment Schemes (HLS and BPS);** resolve to receive updates;
   - the Clerk's report on the finances showing an amount of £**21674.80** available.
   - **Horner Hill**; the actual site of the proposed pond was found to be at ST2496 4021, a parcel of 0.80ha of Woodland with options of 'selectively fell trees' and 'remove non-native and invasive species' being applied; agreed the Pond can go ahead within the timescales set out by Natural England (March), and within the costs already quoted of £1930. **DA/TT**
   - **Trespassing Report**; the Council meeting of the 23rd February agreed to further action to limit transgression by powered vehicles and bikes onto the Turbaries after more incursions took place since the last meeting, damaging the areas, as well as a metal gate being removed and were reported to the Police; agreed that Cllrs seek a more diplomatic approach to try to curb incursions and Cllr Griffiths would send an email on ideas to adopt. **RG**
   - **Hunting Policy**; no further discussions or updates received.
   - **Defra Consultation on Environmental Land Management (ELM)** scheme to replace HLS system in 2024 and after circulation of an invite to take part in trials from Defra, a positive response was received from this Committee, with the Blackdown Hills AONB suggesting a trial for the whole of the Axe catchment be put together; resolve to agree to move this forward. **KP**
   - **Woodland Management Plan**; resolved that a plan of work focussed on removal of invasives including Cherry Laurel be devised, starting in winter 21/22. **KP**
   - **Information Panels**; approved Grant of £2000 from the BHAONB Sustainable Development Fund, the PC to pay £1275 as matched funding for the first two boards and needs to be completed by Marc; agree to re-apply in the next financial year for the other two boards. **DA/BD/RG/KP**
7) **Turbaries**; resolved to; receive an update on current work completed or scheduled; agree future work plans and finance for each site see **App1 below** for more detail;- Bucehayes (AG00287440); Quantock (AG00287502); Horner Hill (AG00291818); Shortmoor (AG00305847); Huntshayes (BPS); Shore Bottom (BPS); resolved to agree outcomes from overhanging trees across parts of the Turbaries with 2 quotes received and agreed the lowest.
8) **Communications**; resolved to; publish 'Spring Watch' when drafted on the Tree and Website & on the AONB; confirmed that the remote cameras will be placed soon near nest boxes. **DA/GP**
9) **Items of Future Business for the next Agenda**; meeting in July, winter work and for **WMP**.

Signed …… 30th March 2021
Chairman; Meeting closed at 5.00pm

APP1 TURBARIES:

(i)Bucehayes (AG00287440); reported that 2 days contract work with the RSPB had been concluded satisfactorily. Two clumps of scrub had been removed from the southern enclosure; the fence-line had been repaired and checked throughout; a considerable area of Birch/Willow scrub near the western perimeter, south of the field gate in the northern enclosure, had been cleared. There is need for one day's work this summer to lop birch whips and to paint stumps. **Approved**. Summer grazing will be by ponies but their safe enclosure has relied on electrification. It appears that the ancient energiser has been lost from the Harker's garage that has been rebuilt. It was agreed that use of mains electricity was preferable to battery operation, and Toby volunteered to look for a replacement. David confirmed that he had spoken to Paula Harker about this Discussion over a lookerer for ponies this summer centred on the heavy commitment that this entails. Richard advised David to consult Heather Burnett first, to see if she wanted to do this again, before re-advertising**.**

(ii) **Quantock (AG00287502);**
Two days of winter work are scheduled for 30th and 31st March, Toby confirms. Summer grazing hopefully will rely on ponies again, except in the exclusion area, fenced off with electrified tape.

(iii) **Shortmoor (AG00305847)**;
Summer grazing, with ponies again, Toby reports that the fence-line has now been repaired.

(iv) **Horner Hill (AG00291818);**
Ken confirmed that the pond proposal has now been approved. Toby confirmed that clearance of the site will be done on Thursday 18th and Friday 19th March. David will contact Andy Podbery to give the go-ahead. Amanda will advertise this work on the Tree and Website. There is one day in hand to conclude winter brush-cutting on the open hillside. This is scheduled for 28th March. David raised the question of long-term management of the open hillside. Might there be more cost-effective &/or labour saving means of management? There is now the possibility of using virtual fencing with which to "enclose" grazing cattle, using collars, at a cost of about £300 each, plus an annual subscription of £50 per collar. Toby and the RSPB are using the system increasingly (see attached) and using collars on ponies is under trial. An alternative could be use of an alpine tractor and flail but an inherent disadvantage is that there is no means of removal of the cut material (with brush cutting, raking removes the litter so ensuring the land remains infertile).

(v) **HUNTSHAYES**
No work and no plans.

(VI) **SHOREBOTTOM** Quotes are being sought by Peter for contractor work to clear or lop branches overhanging the circular route from the "Goat path" to the Bungalow, Merrydown, Melstock and round to Shorms and Bay Cottage. one days' work is anticipated. David proposes the following dates for Balsam pulling this summer: 12th June, 3rd July, 17th July and 31st July. These dates will be advertised by Amanda nearer the time. Paul asks that the parish council writes an official letter to Jean Holway for permission to access and cross her land to continue this work (which is now part of the new Woodland Man. Plan)